Discovery of an indigenous strain of AIDS

4176. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's first death of an AIDS' positive patient who acquired the virus indigenously occurred in vellore, Tamil Nadu on May 14, 1988;

(b) if so, whether it suggests discovery of an indigenous strain of AIDS virus; and

(c) what is Government's latest assessment of the magnitude of the AIDS problem in India, in the light of the said discovery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) Yes.

(b) This is the first case of AIDS acquired indigenously from another Indian who had infection with the virus. There is, however, no evidence that the virus is in anyway different from the ones infecting the other AIDS cases reported from India in patients who acquired the infection abroad. In addition to the case from Tamil Nadu, there have been 3 other cases of AIDS in whom the infection was acquired indigenously.

(c) so far, there had been 23 cases of AIDS detected in India. Of these, 7 were foreigners and 16 were Indians. Among the 16 Indians, only 4 appear to have acquired the infection in India. Thus the magnitude of clinically ill AIDS cases in India appears to be quite low.

Acquisition of ships by composed companies

4177. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Surface Transport has proposed that composed companies in India should be encouraged to acquire ships; and

(b) if so, whether the Ministry had approached the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to furnish the future projections regarding additional requirements of off-shore supply vessels, if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) There is no specific proposal to encourage composite companies for acquisition of ship. At present various composite companies are owning ships.

(b) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has projected a shortfall of 13—17 Off-shore Supply vessels during the Seventh Plan period and 9-10 OSVs during the Eighth Plan period. The projections for the 8th Plan are tentative.

Incentives to shipping companies

4178. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Surface Transport has sought several fiscal incentives for encouraging new investment in public issues by shipping companies; and

(b) if so, what are the main incentives which are likely to be provided and to what extent these would help shipping units to raise their capital?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) An Expert Group set up by this Ministry has recommended various concessions to be extended to the industry under the provisions of the Indian Income Tax Act which includes extension of the facilities of Section 80 CC, dividend paid by the shipping companies should be exempt from tax, benefit of section 80 PRA etc.

Monitoring of diseases etc. by Central Bureau of Health Statistics

4179. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether monitoring of the outbreaks of diseases, morbidities, mortalities, fatalities, epidemics in the country is the